

OFFICE OF THE DD/I  
Approved For Release 2006/02/07 : CIA-RDP80B01495R000600

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TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes in NIE Process

Attached are OSR comments [ ] and [ ] on the draft DCI response to the President concerning proposed PFIAB/NSC changes in the NIE process.

(Key elements of the proposed changes --which are addressed to NIE 11-3/8-75, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict Through the Mid-1980's"-- include:  
--a recommendation that an independent analysis group of both government and non-government representatives be formed to produce an experimental estimate on the capability of Soviet strategic forces in the fields of anti-submarine warfare and accuracy of ICBMs. This estimate, which would be independent of NIE 11-3/8-75, should present a spectrum of opposing views and alternative interpretations and highlight gaps in knowledge.  
--a recommendation that an "ad hoc net assessment working group" be established by the Interdepartmental Political-Military Group to prepare a net assessment of this experimental estimate.  
--a recommendation that the Undersecretaries Committee compare and critique the experimental estimate and NIE 11-3/8-75.)

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Neither the NIOs nor OSR think much of the experiment. OSR points out that an estimative experiment would be costly in terms of manpower resources and would have a disruptive effect. They feel that, if undertaken in the near future, the experiment could degrade analytical efforts on new strategic data and have an adverse effect on SALT negotiations and monitoring. The addition of the two complex steps to the estimative process could mean that the consumer would get a product up to one-year old. Finally, OSR fears that the PFIAB/NSC recommendations could have an adverse impact on the DCI's relationship with the policymakers.

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8 October 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant NIO for Strategic Programs

SUBJECT : Draft DCI Response to the President  
on PFIAB Proposals

1. There is much in the 3 October 1975 draft that is fair and constructive. I believe it would be useful to elaborate early in the response on the following point: The expressed concerns of the PFIAB involve not merely the content of national strategic intelligence, but the relationship between intelligence and policy. NIEs cannot alone establish that relationship. It takes a close, reflective dialogue between intelligence analysts and policymakers to deal most effectively with the kinds of concerns raised by the PFIAB.
2. In the past, the NSSM process, the DPRC arena, and other devices have helped to meet this need in the strategic area. Lately, except to support SALT decisionmaking, these devices have fallen into disuse. In fact, the last major strategic NSSM, Number 191, appears to have been quietly shelved despite more than a year's work and a focus that, in theory at least, included the kind of issues that concern PFIAB. Were the NSSM process alive and well, it would provide a more legitimate and more orderly forum for addressing those issues than the experiment PFIAB proposes.
3. In taking a position on the PFIAB and NSC Staff proposals for an experiment in strategic estimating, there are several important issues we must keep in mind.

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4. NIE 11-3/8-75, currently in progress, goes well beyond its predecessor in laying out our uncertainties about key estimative issues. In taking these steps, we were strongly influenced by PFIAB's concerns. We should have the judgment of PFIAB and other customers concerning whether and to what extent the current estimate allays those concerns before we begin an experiment in strategic estimating.

5. An estimative experiment, whether narrowly focused as in the draft Kissinger memorandum or more broadly focused as in the proposed DCI response, would be costly in resources. We would certainly want to involve some of our best personnel in the NSC-chaired review of "net assessment." Involvement of outsiders in a review of major intelligence uncertainties would oblige us to devote much effort to educating even the best informed of them on all the data and arguments we use in preparing the national estimate. Such an undertaking would have disruptive effects. If undertaken in the near future, it would probably degrade the effort we can put on analysis of new strategic data, support of SALT negotiations and the ratification process, and SALT monitoring. In other words, the next six months to a year may prove to be one of the least convenient times to conduct such an experiment from the consumers' point of view, as well as our own.

6. In this connection, it should be noted that under the present production cycle, the bulk of NIE 11-3/8 reflects analysis essentially completed at least six months prior to the date of issue. The addition of two complex steps to the process, after the entire text is frozen by USIB approval, would mean the consumer would get a final product that could be as much as a year old.

7. Finally, and perhaps most vital, the PFIAB/NSC Staff recommendations imply drastic changes in the manner whereby national strategic intelligence serves policy. But we would, if we undertook the proposed experiment now, be toying rather blindly with such changes in a highly unpredictable institutional setting. Clearly the role of the DCI, his relationship to the policy process, and his tools for managing the community

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are evolving. The future role, composition, and pre-occupations of the PFIAB are similarly uncertain. In this situation, an experiment attempting to integrate divergent outside views on major uncertainties into national strategic intelligence and to delimit the proper bounds of force exchange analysis in its development could either prove wasteful or prejudice larger issues in ways we could not easily foresee.

8. In this regard, it is our impression that at least one consumer, Mr. Molander of the NSC Staff, has stated that his office was opposed to the recommendations for changes in the NIE process. Other consumers may also be opposed to the change, and they should be given an opportunity to voice their opinions on the experiment.


9. For these reasons, I recommend a response to the President that:

a. Invites the PFIAB to review NIE 11-3/8-75 in the light of its earlier concerns.

b. Promises increased attention to PFIAB's concerns in all future strategic intelligence analysis.

c. Invites interested PFIAB members to monitor and comment informally on the analysis of substantive strategic issues during the course of the next estimative cycle.

d. Defers a more formal experiment of the kind proposed until larger issues regarding the national intelligence process have been resolved.

  
RICHARD LEHMAN  
Director  
Strategic Research

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